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GENERAL ASSEMBLY
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Items 20 (c) and 45 of the provisional agenda*
STRENGTHENING OF THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS INCLUDING SPECIAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE: EMERGENCY INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR PEACE, NORMALCY AND RECONSTRUCTION OF WAR-STRICKEN AFGHANISTAN
THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-third year

Letter dated 22 August 1998 from the representatives of the Russian Federation and Tajikistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a joint statement on the outcome of the Russian-Tajik talks that were held in Dushanbe on 19 and 20 August 1998 (see annex).

We should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the fifty-third session of the General Assembly, under items 20 (c) and 45 of the provisional agenda, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Rashid ALIMOV
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
of Tajikistan
to the United Nations

(Signed) Yuriy FEDOTOV
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Permanent Mission of the
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* A/53/150.

ANNEX

Joint statement issued on 20 August 1998 on the outcome of the Russian-Tajik talks

Russian-Tajik talks were held in Dushanbe on 19 and 20 August 1998. The Russian side was represented by the First Deputy Minister of Defence and Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, General A. V. Kvashnin, and the First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Mr. B. N. Pastukhov. The Tajik side was represented by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan, Mr. T. N. Nazarov, and the Minister of Defence of Tajikistan, Mr. Sh. Kh. Khairullaev. The delegations of the two sides included senior officials of other interested Russian and Tajik departments.

The representatives of the Russian leadership had a long and substantive conversation with the President of Tajikistan, Mr. Emomali Rakhmonov, who expressed his deep satisfaction at the exchange of views on a wide range of issues relating to bilateral relations and international and regional problems.

In particular, the sides stressed the need for close cooperation with a view to strengthening the security of Tajikistan and safeguarding and defending the Tajik-Afghan border and the southern boundaries of the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States that are parties to the Treaty on Collective Security, in the light of the sharp aggravation of the situation in northern Afghanistan. The new offensive by groups of the Taliban Movement, made possible by massive military, material and financial support and assistance from abroad, confirms the fact that the Taliban are seeking to solve the Afghan problem by force of arms. The natural desire of the Afghan people to restore national accord and preserve the territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty of their homeland has been ignored. The international community's efforts to establish an inter-Afghan negotiations process have for all intents and purposes been derailed.

The Russian Federation and Tajikistan are deeply concerned at the escalation of the bloodshed in Afghanistan and at the fact that military operations are being conducted in immediate proximity to the Tajik-Afghan border, which poses a direct threat to the southern borders of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

The sides call for an immediate halt to the fratricidal war and for the commencement of a constructive dialogue between the opposing Afghan sides, bearing in mind the need to establish solid foundations for the administration of the State through the creation of a broadly representative Government with the participation of all strata of the population, national and religious groups and influential political forces. Only a comprehensive political settlement, under United Nations auspices, can help Afghanistan find peaceful solutions that will enable it to carry out the difficult but necessary transition from war to peace, stability and security and economic rehabilitation.

The Russian Federation and Tajikistan call upon the countries involved in the Afghan conflict to prevent violations of the generally accepted norms of international law and refrain from interfering in Afghanistan's internal affairs, which includes the dispatch to Afghanistan of their personnel for participation in military operations.

The Security Council's resolutions on Afghanistan should be strictly implemented by all States without any exceptions.

The Russian Federation and Tajikistan are prepared to establish contacts at any level with representatives of the Afghan parties to the conflict in order to find ways to ensure a speedy cessation of hostilities and to help break the deadlock in the crisis.

The peace process in Tajikistan should proceed rigorously on the basis of the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord, signed in Moscow on 27 June 1997. There is no reasonable alternative. Any kind of interference in that process from outside is inadmissible. The Russian Federation and Tajikistan reserve the right to take all the necessary measures to strengthen the security of their external borders in accordance with the Treaty on Collective Security of 15 May 1992 in the event of a threat to the national interests of the two countries or other States of Central Asia.

The talks between the plenipotentiaries of the Russian Federation and Tajikistan were held in a spirit of complete mutual understanding. The sides stressed their readiness to continue to act in full coordination both on a bilateral basis and within the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States.